
ALBANIA YESTERDAY AND TODAY

342 dwellings immediately enables one to make the distinction between the natives of this district. The comfortable handsome stone houses, with large galleries on the upper stories before the living rooms and the stables below, denote the typical Albanian peasant homes. And in the immediate vicinity, the small reed huts tenanted by the gypsies.

51.3 There are two kinds of gypsies in this interesting country: one is the same as the English variety, speaking the quaint old Romany, although knowing at the same time the language of the country. This branch of gypsies is the eternal wanderer, constantly moving from one district to another, pitching their temporary tents wheresoever they will.

- 42 Their keenest interest is in horses and they live by their tradings and quite often entirely by their wits. The other kind of gypsies is those, who, having forgotten almost all of their Romany, speak only Albanian, and a little Turkish where they are old enough to have experienced the Turkish occupation of Albania. Essentially lazy, these broken-up tribes live mostly in the towns, gaining their daily bread in the simplest and most convenient way possible for them: singing and danc-

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513 There is no material evidence to the tradition that there was once a Jewish colony in Elbasan.

• 443 The picturesque brown bazaar is held once a week just outside the south wall, and nowhere in all Albania is there to be found such a grand confusion of color as among the native costumes on market-day, which is generally Saturday.

346 There are several fine old mosques which are gems of Turkish architecture, especially that of Nazireshe located near the Vlach quarter, and it is one of the oldest and most beautiful in the country.

Among the newer buildings are the archaeological museum, the Baholi library, the normal school, erected at the foot of the dense olive groves just north of the town, and the 274 new Alcohol factory a very few miles along the road leading to Korcha (Korça). The 485 Grand Hotel and the Hotel Adriatik, with excellent European and native cuisines, add much to the desirability of visiting this Albanian center.

000 A strange, weird beauty is found among the olive groves at Elbasan, and the many walks through these young forests are indeed delightful. They add a strong note of contrast,

Fisheries

THE fishery industry in Albania has tremendous possibilities and is so far only partially developed. At the present time, canned fish is imported into Albania from foreign countries, which is without reason or actual necessity, for the whole of Albania's western boundary is the plentiful Adriatic Sea, not to mention the innumerable large lakes and rivers. If this tremendous, almost inexhaustible, possibility were to be sounded, there would be found a resource more than sufficient to supply the whole of Europe. This great promise for canneries is only one of the many for which the Adriatic Sea may be utilized. 228

In the large lakes of Scutari, Ochrida, Malik and Presba there is a supply of fish which has remained abundant through the centuries. The method of catching these fish is still the primitive use of fences on the banks of the rivers and lakes. From these fisheries the State claims 70%, the remaining 30% being kept by the fisherman. If fish are caught 226 443 •

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(226)
•443 Outside of these enclosures, the government claims only 20%. The percentage of fish which comes to the government is sold by auction to private enterprises.

The centers of these auction markets are as follows:

(1) Scutari: The lakes of Scutari, Murtepe, Kakarriqi and Lundra, with the rivers of Bojana and Drin;

(2) Leshnja: The Old-Drin river and the Adriatic coast from the mouth of the Bojana to that of the Mati;

(3) Durazzo: The mouth of the Mati, the lake of Durazzo, Shlliza, the mouth of the Erzen and the Adriatic coast from the mouth of the Mati to lake Karavasta;

(4) Lushnja: The lakes of Karavasta, Divjaku, Terbuffi, the river Shkumbi, and the Adriatic coast from Karavasta to the mouth of the Semeni;

(5) The Semeni and Devolli rivers;

(6) Valona: The lakes of Narta, Sverneci; the Shushica and Viosa rivers, and the coast of the Adriatic from the mouth of the Semeni to Himara;

(7) Saranda-Delvina: The lakes of Butrinto and Ristica; the Argyrocastro river and the

FISHERIES

coast of the Adriatic from Himara to the 443. frontier of Greece,

(8) The lakes of Pogradec, Ochrida and Prespa.

There are all kinds of fish to be found in 136 these waters, mainly: bass, trout, eel, carp, whitebait, red mullet, sole, sea-fish, etc.

The proceeds from these sales are generally 228 between 350,000 and 400,000 gold Francs annually, although there are some years when the amounts are remarkably higher.

There is no element of risk in this industry.

This industry promises to become an immense source of revenue when fully developed on a modern basis and for this purpose foreign capital is urgently needed and would be welcomed in Albania.

443



THE SHOPPING CENTER IN TIRANA

These mountain women are admiring the strange weaving and color of handana handkerchiefs and unbleached muslin from Europe. But they will sigh and content themselves with their own hand-woven silks and cottons, and if they buy anything, it will be the brightly painted cradle. An unbetrothed girl baby who was strapped into so fine a cradle might well hope to be married in Tirana or Scutari.

(150a)



Once a week she comes walking over fifteen miles of mountain trails, to be ready for business bright and early on Bazaar Day. This week she has brought jars of kos (the thickened but not soured milk that she makes by putting three sprigs of grape vine into the boiled milk) and plums and baskets, and on the way she has been knitting. When she finishes the gay sock pinned to her jacket she will sell that, too.

443

[176a]

CHAPTER XI

Elbasan—At the Fez-maker's—Factories or No Factories—An Albanian Schoolboy—Antiques—The Bechtashi Monastery—The Strange Story of a Saint—A Remarkable Belief—The Giant Cypresses of Elbasan—The Inn—Osman the Art Critic—In the Restaurant—Concerning Patriotism.

361



GIPSY WOMAN

ELBASAN, an ancient Moham-medān city of 15,000 inhabitants, is a piece of Asia set down in Europe. The streets are narrow, and paved with the customary irregular cobblestones. The shops, of one storey only, appear to be saved from entire collapse by props, posts, and other temporary supports. The heavily-tiled roofs, which tumble about at all sorts of angles, suggest a rough sea petrified. The main

square boasts a plane tree of tremendous girth—a veritable Methuselah of trees—in whose extensive shade sit country-folk with their various produce for sale beside them. Everyone who is anyone owns a shop, and the life of the place centres in the bazaar. The itinerant coffee-vendor, a man much in request, walks about all day with a

Elbasan

443 circular tray on which are set out half a dozen long-handled
361 Turkish-coffee-pots, a few tiny cups, and a handful of glowing
charcoal. As he goes he rattles a pair of tongs—the audible



THE GIANT CYPRESSES OF ELBASAN

sign of his trade. Elsewhere the ice-cream man with his bucket makes his own special appeal, crying his wares in a loud and raucous voice. Somebody is always bawling in the Elbasan streets.